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# GENE AUTRY

*in*  
*Claws of the killer*





MASTER COATES MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY CLOSE TO MOVES WHEN HE HEARD THE SHOTS, HARDY.

YEAH? HOW D'YOU FIGGER THAT?

WHY---EASY! THE BEAR DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO MAUL THE MAN HE'D KILLED.

THAT'S RIGHT, GENE--MOSTLY A GRIZZLY WILL USE ITS TEETH TO FINISH A MAN.

WE'RE CLOSE TO THE PLACE NOW---NOT FAR FROM THE CIRCLE C LINE.



RIGHT THERE IS WHERE WE FOUND BERT'S BODY...YOU CAN SEE THE MARK IN THE DIRT.

UH-HUH...PLENTEY OF BEAR TRACKS AND BOOT TRACKS, TOO.



BETTER CLUMP BACK ON YOUR HORSE, DAVE---WE CAN FOLLOW THIS TRAIL WITHOUT LEAVING THE SADDLE---FOR A WHILE, ANYWAY. BLAINEST BEAR TRACKS I EVER SAW.



YOU TRAILING ALONG WITH US, HARDY?

NOPE! I'VE GOT THINGS TO ATTEND TO AT THE RANCH... WISH YOU LUCK!

HERE'S WHERE THE TROUBLE BEGINS, DAVE---ROCKS DON'T SHOW BEAR TRACKS WORTH A CENT.

NO CLAW MARKS, EITHER? THIS IS SOFT ROCK.



THE TRACKS  
STOP COMPLETELY  
HERE-- WITH A FEW  
FAINT CLAW MARKS.  
IT ISN'T REASONABLE,  
BUT IT'S A FACT!



GENE WE'VE BEEN  
HUNTING FOR FIVE HOURS  
NOW-- WITHOUT FINDING  
ANOTHER BEAR TRACK!  
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.



YOU'RE RIGHT, DAVE.  
THE ONLY TRACKS  
WE'VE SEEN SINCE  
LOSING THE BEAR TRAIL  
WERE MADE BY COATERS  
AND HARDY'S HORSES.  
WE'D BETTER  
TURN BACK.



THERE'S THE LIGHTS  
OF THE WARRICK RANCH  
HOUSE. WE'LL DROP IN  
FOR SUPPER THERE,  
INSTEAD OF RIDING WAY  
BACK TO TOWN.



IT'S A MIGHTY  
PROSPEROUS LOOKING  
OUTFIT, DAVE.

BEST IN FIVE PINES COUNTY  
--- BETTER THAN  
WALDEN COATES'S  
SPREAD, AND  
OWNED BY A GIRL  
OF 21!



A GIRL RUNS THIS  
RANCH? HOW COME?

VERA WARRICK'S  
FATHER LEFT IT TO HER, A  
FEW MONTHS  
AGO-- SHE'S  
A TOP HAND  
IN ANY MAN'S  
LANGUAGE ---  
AND PRETTY  
TOO.



DAVE LASSEN! WHERE HAVE YOU  
BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF?

HARD AT WORK.  
I RECKON, VERA. MEET MY  
OLD SICKICK, GENE ALTRY.



UNITED STATES MARSHAL  
GENE AUTRY---ISN'T IT?  
DAVE IS ALWAYS TELLING  
US SOME NEW STORY OF  
OUTLAW-HUNTING WITH YOU.

DAVE LASSEN IS A TALKING  
MACHINE, MISS WARRING---  
ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS  
WIND HIM UP, AND HE'LL GAB  
ALL DAY!



WE'D ALL BETTER QUIT  
TALKING AND GO INSIDE.  
MOTHER HAS SUPPER  
HOT, AND SHE'S LAID  
EXTRA PLATES FOR  
YOU---SAY YOU COMING!

WE NEED SOMETHING  
LIKE THAT TO COMFORT  
US AFTER TODAY,  
I RECKON.



I HEARD THAT LAST  
REMARK, DAVE!  
WHAT'S GONE WRONG  
THAT YOU NEED  
COMFORTING?

A FRIEND KILLED  
AND A TRAIL LOST, MA!  
I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT.



THE BEAR THAT KILLED BERT MOYES  
MIGHT HAVE WEIGHED ALL OF HALF A TON!  
HIS TRACKS WERE DEEPER THAN MOST---

...AND THEN THEY  
STOPPED--AS IF HE'D  
GONE UP IN SMOKE!

COULDN'T  
HE HAVE  
KEPT TO  
THE ROCKS?



NO! THERE  
WASN'T ENOUGH ROCKS  
IN THAT SECTION FOR  
HIM TO TRAVEL ON,  
ALL THE TIME...IT'S  
JUST ANOTHER CURSED  
MYSTERY!



EVENING, FOLKS! I'M ON MY  
WAY TO THE MINE, FROM FIVE PINES---  
BUT I HAD TO DROP IN FOR A MINUTE.

SANDY MCGOWAN!  
DON'T YOU EVER DARE TO  
PASS US UP! PULL UP  
A CHAIR.



MARSHAL  
AUTRY MEET  
SANDY---  
OWNER OF  
THE SILVER  
WING MINE.



I RODE PART WAY  
WITH BANKER COATES  
... HE'S ALL BROKEN  
UP OVER THE DEATH  
OF BERT NOYES.

HE WOULD  
BE! BERT  
KNEW A LOT  
MORE ABOUT  
BANKING THAN  
WALKER COATES  
EVER WILL KNOW.

I'D JOIN YOU AND  
MARSHAL AULTRY  
HUNTING FOR THAT  
BEAR, IF I WAS ANY  
USE AS A TRACKER  
LASSER... BUT I'M  
NOT! MINING IS  
ABOUT ALL  
I KNOW.

WE'LL NEED  
SOMETHING  
BETTER THAN  
TRACKING SKILL  
MCGOWAN ---  
WHERE THERE  
AREN'T ANY  
TRACKS!

EXCUSE ME, VERA, FOR  
RUNNING OFF SO SOON!  
I'VE GOT TO WORK ALL  
NIGHT SHORING UP A  
NEW DRIFT.

SANDY!  
I HATE TO HAVE YOU  
RIDING ALONE... AT  
NIGHT-- WITH THAT  
WOUNDED GRIZZLY ON  
THE PROO.

BE CAREFUL, SANDY!  
I--- I'VE GOT A QUEER  
FEELING ABOUT  
THAT BEAR.

FORGET IT, HONEY!  
I'M NOT TRAILING  
THE BRUTE... NIGHT!

YOU TWO BOYS GO ON  
INTO THE LIVING ROOM---  
MA AND I ARE TAKING  
CARE OF THE DISHES...  
HEAR?

ORDERS ARE  
ORDERS, VERA!...  
COME ON, GENE!

I'LL GIVE OUR HORSES  
A DRINK OF WATER, DAVE  
--- BE RIGHT BACK.

OKAY, GENE.

HEE EEEEEEE-UH!

WHAT THE ---?  
A HORSE ONLY SREAMS  
THAT WAY WHEN HE'S  
SCARED TO DEATH.



DAVE! WHERE DID THAT  
AWFUL HORSE SCREAM  
COME FROM?

FROM THE ROAD BY THE  
SILVER WING NINE...  
THE WAY SANDY MCGOWAN  
WENT.



GET YOUR HORSES! WHAT  
ARE YOU WAITING FOR?  
IT'S THAT KILLER BEAR!

I BEGON  
SHE'S RIGHT,  
DAVE.



DON'T STOP TO SADDLE  
UP, GENE...OR THAT  
GIRL WILL GET THERE  
AHEAD OF US.



WHILE LASSEN IS CATCHING HIS HORSE,  
GENE JUMPS ABOARD CHAMP...



... AND GLIDING THE GREAT HORSE  
BY KNEES ALONE, PASSES VERA  
AT THE BARN.



GOOD THING THE MOON  
IS BRIGHT, CHAMP--EASY, BOY!  
I SEE SOMETHING!



WHOA, CHAMP! IT'S MCGOWAN  
---AND HIS HORSE!





SANDY! SANDY!



OH, MY DEAR, MY DEAR!

HE'S ALIVE, VERA---  
BUT I THINK HIS SKULL  
IS FRACTURED... THE BEAR'S  
PAW CAUGHT HIM ON  
THE TOP OF THE HEAD.



HERE'S A QUEER THING,  
DAVE---McGOWAN'S GUN WAS  
IN HIS HOLSTER---UNFIRED!

WHAT? HOW COULD A  
GRIZZLY SURPRISE A  
RIDER THAT QUICK---ON  
THE OPEN PRAIRIE?



YOU TRY TO FIGURE  
THAT ONE OUT, DAVE! I  
WANT A LOOK AT HIS  
HORSE, NOW.

UMPH! IT SURE  
BEATS ME!



NECK BROKEN  
WITH ONE PAW-BLOW!  
I'VE HEARD OF SUCH  
THINGS, BUT THIS IS THE  
FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN IT.



SEND VERA BACK FOR A WAGON,  
AND TO PHONE THE DOCTOR, DAVE--  
I'M TRAILING THAT BEAR  
WHILE THE TRACKS  
ARE HOT!

OKAY, GENE---  
WATCH YOURSELF!



IF THE MOONLIGHT AND THE TRACKS  
WEREN'T SO CLEAR, WE'D HAVE TO  
WAIT FOR SUNUP, CHAM!

MAYBE WE'LL STILL HAVE  
TO DO THAT---IF THOSE  
CLOUDS BLOT OUT  
THE MOON.



SAME OLD STUNT-  
LORING HIS TRAIL  
AMONG THE ROCKS,  
WHERE EVEN A HORSE  
WOULD HAVE TROUBLE  
TO FOLLOW!



WE'LL CIRCLE AROUND  
THIS PATCH AND LOOK  
FOR SIGNS IN THE SOFT  
GROUND BEYOND.



WE OUGHT TO PICK  
IT UP AGAIN---  
ABOUT HERE---



HIS WHO'S THAT---COATES?



YEAH! THAT  
MARSHAL AUTRY?

NEARLY RODE INTO YOU, AUTRY...SAY---  
WHAT'S WRONG? WHERE'S YOUR SADDLE?

AT WARRINGS! WE HEARD A HORSE  
SCREAM AND RODE FOR THE PLACE---  
IT WAS YOUNG AFGOWAN---NEARLY  
BRAINED BY A BEAR'S PAW.  
I'M TRAILING THE DEVILSH---



HEY! THESE HORSES  
MUST SMELL BEAR--- THE  
WAY THEY'RE ACTING!



QUI---QUIT IT, CHAMP!  
BOGGONE YOUR HIDE!  
YOU KNOW I'M RIDING  
WITHOUT EVEN A  
BURCINGLE! WHOA!



THAT'S BETTER---BUT  
WHAT THE DELUCE MAKES  
YOU TREMBLE THAT WAY,  
BOY? I NEVER SAW YOU  
SO SCARED!



COATES! HI!... COATES!  
(WHERE'D HE GO TO?)



TWO PISTOL SHOTS! AND  
THE MOON'S OUT AGAIN!  
COATES MUST HAVE BEEN  
CRAZY, OR IN A BAD JAM, TO  
SHOOT THAT GRIZZLY  
WITH A SIX GUN!  
FASTER, CHAMP!



MISSED HIM, CLEAN! BIGGEST GRIZZLY  
I EVER SAW! WENT THAT WAY.

YOU CAN BE WHOOPING  
GLAD YOU DIDN'T HIT HIM,  
COATES! IF YOU HAD, I COULDN'T  
HAVE GOTTEN HERE IN TIME,  
WITH THIS RIFLE.



I RECKON I WAS A FOOL, AUTRY---NO  
PISTOL HAS POWER ENOUGH TO STOP  
A THOUSAND POUND BEAR...BY THE WAY,  
DID HE KILL POOR AF GOWAN?



NO...BUT THE BOY IS IN BAD  
SHAPE---UNCONSCIOUS, OF  
COURSE... TO SAY A HOSPITAL  
IS HIS ONLY HOPE...

I WAS ON MY WAY TO  
WARRINGS---TO TELL THEM  
ABOUT NOYES... I'LL SEE IF THERE'S  
ANYTHING I CAN DO THERE, NOW...  
SO LONG!



WAIT HERE, CHAMP!  
I'LL SEE IF I CAN PICK  
UP MISTER GRIZZLY'S  
TRACKS WHERE  
COATES SHOT  
AT HIM...

NOT A SIGN OF A  
TRACK! EITHER COATES  
FIRED AT A SHADOW  
OR THAT BEAR'S  
GOT WINGS.

THERE'S ONE MORE CHANCE  
...IF THE MOON COMES OUT  
AGAIN...I'LL SEARCH THE  
GROUND NEAR WHERE THE  
BRUTE SPOOKED YOU INTO BUCKING,  
CHAMP.

IT WAS JUST ABOUT  
HERE---GOOD! THE  
MOON'S CLEAR NOW!

THERE THEY ARE---  
CLEAR AS PRINT! BUT,  
WAIT A MINUTE---

THIS IS THE SAME SPOT  
WHERE I NEARLY RAN INTO  
COATES...I'LL SWEAR IT  
IS! RIGHT BY  
THIS BIG ROCK...

BUT THE ONLY TRACKS I CAN  
FIND ARE CHAMP'S AND THE BEAR'S!

SUCH THINGS DON'T HAPPEN---THEY JUST  
CAN'T HAPPEN---BUT THAT'S WHAT THESE  
TRACKS SAY: IT WAS BEAR, NOT COATES,  
THAT MET ME, AND WALKED AWAY AGAIN!  
MAYBE I'M CRAZY...

OH! OH! MY  
AUNT HERSHBAH'S  
PICTURE HAT! WHY  
DIDN'T I NOTICE THAT  
BEFORE? IF IT'S TRUE,  
THEN I'M NOT CRAZY--



THAT'S HOW IT COULD HAPPEN,  
BUT I WISH I COULD GUESS  
THE WHY OF IT! IF I DON'T GET  
THE ANSWER PRETTY SOON,  
THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE  
THE KILLINGS WILL STOP!



COME ON, CHAMP!  
THE QUICKER WE  
GET BACK TO WARRINGS,  
THE BETTER I'LL FEEL  
ABOUT SANDY M'GOWAN'S  
CHANCES TO GET WELL.



THERE'S DAVE'S HORSE  
IN THE CORRAL, CHAMP--  
BUT NO SIGN OF COATES'S--  
MAYBE HE PUT HIM IN  
THE BARN.



GENE! MAN--AM I GLAD  
TO SEE YOU BACK!  
HOW CLOSE DID YOU  
GET TO THAT KILLER?

CLOSE ENOUGH  
TO CURL MY  
HAIR--THAT'S ALL!  
WHERE'S BANKER  
COATES?



COATES? HE HASN'T BEEN  
HERE--DID YOU SEE HIM?

UH-HUH--HE SAID HE  
WAS HEADED FOR THIS  
PLACE--QUEER WHERE  
HE WENT TO! TELL  
ME--HOW IS YOUNG  
M'GOWAN?



IN THIS ROOM--  
VERA AND HER MOTHER  
ARE WITH HIM--HE'S  
STILL UNCONSCIOUS.

HE WOULD BE  
--IT'S A WONDER  
HE'S ALIVE!



OH--I THOUGHT YOU WERE  
THE DOCTOR, MISTER ATRYX

I WISH I WERE, MR. WARRING!  
HOW IS THE PATIENT NOW?



I'M TERRIBLY WORRIED ABOUT SANDY! THE PULSE IS FAINT AND THE BREATHING ROUGH...HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYBODY, AND YET ANY SUDDEN SOUND DISTURBS HIM! IF ONLY DOCTOR GREEN---

THE FRONT DOOR JUST CLOSED! PERHAPS HE'S COME NOW.



COATES! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?



SULTAN...MY HORSE --- JUMPED ME AND RAN FOR A MILE! SMILED THAT BEAT AGAIN, I RECKON... I WAS LUCKY-TO CATCH HIM! AH...HOW'S SANDY McGOWN?



IN BAD SHAPE! ONLY A DOCTOR CAN GUESS HOW BAD... BETTER NOT GO IN THERE, COATES--- NOISE, EVEN VOICES COULD MAKE HIM WORSE.



HUMMM! THAT'S SURE BAD NEWS! DOC GREEN IS COMING OUT, OF COURSE?

HE OUGHT TO BE HERE NOW. ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT, WALD.



THE CLOCK'S SLOW-MOVING HANDS HAVE COVERED JUST AN HOUR, WHEN---



SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO DOCTOR GREEN, BOYS! I JUST TELEPHONED HIS OFFICE---HE LEFT THERE MORE THAN TWO HOURS AGO. WE'RE GOING NOW TO LOOK FOR HIM!



WHISLE! I'M CALLING OUT THE MEN IN THE BUNKHOUSE.

COME ON, DAVE--- COATES! WE'VE WAITED TOO LONG.



THERE ARE THREE WAYS FROM TOWN, AND DOC COULD HAVE TAKEN ANY ONE OF 'EM. YOU AND VERA RIDE BACK, ALONG THE SHORT CUT, DEAR... WILD COATS AND I WILL HEAD TWO OTHER SEARCH PARTIES.

ALL RIGHT, DAVE.

WHAT'S COOKING, MISS VERA?

WAK HUNT! STEVE! DOC GREEN'S IN TROUBLE SOMEWHERE ON THE WAY FROM TOWN... AND THERE'S A KILLER GRIZZLY ON THE PROOF!

FOR A FEW MOMENTS THE BIG HORSE CORRAL IS A SCENE OF FAST AND FURIOUS SADDLING.

LET'S GO, BOYS!  
WE TAKE THE SHORT CUT.

THE BEAR MAY HAVE SPOOKED DOC'S HORSE OFF THE ROAD--SO WE'LL SEARCH BOTH SIDE AND THE MIDDLE.

I'LL TAKE THE ROUGH GROUND TO THE LEFT.

DOCTOR GREEN CAME TO GRIEF PRETTY NEAR THE RANCH-- THAT'S CERTAIN, FROM WHAT I KNOW!



BEAR TRACKS!  
MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT!



IF I FOLLOW THIS  
TRAIL IT'S BOUND TO  
LEAD ME TO  
DOC GREEN ---



OR WHAT'S  
LEFT OF HIM!



DEAD! THERE ISN'T A  
THING WE CAN DO NOW!



DOC'S HORSE MUST HAVE  
GOT AWAY... CHAMP! WHAT DO  
YOU SWELL, BOY?



THIS MIGHT BE  
THE SHOWDOWN---



AN INSTANT LATER, CHAMP WILD WITH FEAR, AND  
FLUX REARS UP TO FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE.



MISS VERA!  
YOU HEARD  
THAT SHOT---?

YES...AND A  
HORSE SCREAMED!  
OVER THERE WHERE  
GENE AUTRY WENT!

COME ON!!

EASY, MISS  
VERA! LET  
ME GO AHEAD!

AS RIDERS FROM ALL THREE  
SEARCH PARTIES HEAD FOR  
THE ROCKY GROUND...

IT'S CHAMP-- GENE AUTRY'S HORSE!

HE'S BEEN  
CLAWED!

WHUCK-ER-EEEE!

CHAMP! IF THE OLD DEVIL  
RIPPED YOU LIKE THAT,  
WHAT DID HE DO TO GENE?

HO-HO-HO-O-O!

UNCLE WILDEN!  
HAVE YOU SEEN---

AUTRY? YES...  
BUT IM AFRAID  
I DIDNT GET HERE  
IN TIME! HE'S  
HERE, IN THIS  
CREVICE, WITH  
DOCTOR GREEN!

I SAW THE BEAR RISE UP  
FROM BEHIND A ROCK TO  
STRIKE AUTRY--- AND I SHOT  
FAST! I MUST HAVE HIT  
HIM, BECAUSE HE  
LEFT AUTRY LYING  
AND CHARGED  
THE MARSHAL'S  
HORSE. MY OWN  
SULTAN WAS  
CUTTING UP SO  
I COULDN'T  
SHOOT AGAIN...



...UNTIL I GOT OFF HIM... THEN I FIRED AGAIN! THE GRIZZLY TURNED AND DISAPPEARED AMONGST THE ROCKS.

ARE THEY BOTH--- DEAD?

WE'LL LIFT THEM OUT AND SEE... COME ON, COATES!



GENE! GENE! WAKE UP!... HE'S COMING TO! VERA.

OH---THANK HEAVEN!



WHAT---HIT ME? A BULLET?

NO! THE BEAR, GENE! YOU'RE LUCKY THE ONLY DAMAGE WAS FOUR CLAW MARKS ON YOUR SLAP. HERE--- LET ME PATCH YOU UP.



UHHMM! I RECKON FALLING INTO THAT CREVICE SAVED ME FROM HORSE... POOR GREEN DIDNT FALL IN QUICK ENOUGH... WHERE'S CHAMP?



WHICKER... WHICKER-BEE!

CHAMP OLD BOY! YOU GOT HURT, TOO? LET ME SEE!



POOR RORY! YOU SURE GOT FLAKED! BUT MOST HORSES FACING WHAT YOU HAD TO FACE WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.



GENE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT GETTING HELP FOR SANDY... DAVE LAGGEN SAYS TELEPHONE FOR ANOTHER DOCTOR... I SAY TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL---NOW!

THAT'S MY ADVICE, VERA--- TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL TONIGHT... UNDER GUARD!

BY THE WAY DAVE--WHERE'D  
WALDEN COATE'S GO?

TO LOOK AFTER HIS HOSS,  
I RECKON---AFRAID THE  
CUSS HAD BUSTED HIS  
BRIDLE AND GONE  
HOME...WHY?



WHY? OH, NOTHING MUCH, DAVE...IT  
JUST STRIKES ME QUEER THAT HE  
SAW A BEAR AS BIG AS A BEEF COW  
KNOCK ME DOWN BEFORE I SAW  
ANYTHING!



AN HOUR LATER A GRIM LITTLE CARNIVALE  
GATHERS OUTSIDE THE WARRING RANCH HOUSE.



DAVE--GENE--TAKE CARE  
THAT NOTHING---UNEXPECTED  
---HAPPENS TO SANDY ON  
THE WAY! I DON'T KNOW WHY,  
BUT I'M JUST HORRIBLY  
AFRAID FOR HIM!

WE'LL PROTECT HIS LIFE  
WITH OURS, IF IT COMES  
TO THAT.

YOU CAN  
COUNT ON US,  
VERA!

THANKS, BOYS!  
MOTHER AND I  
WILL BE WAITING  
FOR---FOR YOUR  
PHONE CALL!  
SO LONG!

DAVE FINDS THE WAGON AND ITS  
GUARDS IN HILLY COUNTRY  
HALFWAY TO THE HOSPITAL  
TOWN OF CANYON FALLS.



I RECKON THE DANGERS OVER,  
GENE--EXCEPT FOR A TICKLISH  
PIECE OF ROAD JUST AHEAD...I'M GOING  
TO RIDE ON THE WAGON AND WATCH  
THE BRAKE.

ALL RIGHT, DIVE----I'LL  
RIDE CLOSE IN FRONT OF  
THE TEAM.



EASY, BOY--EASY  
HERE! DON'T GIVE THE  
PONIES BEHIND US  
ANY EXCUSE  
TO RUN!



HULLO, AUTRY! HOW'S MCGOWAN  
MAKING OUT?

CONTESS! WHERE DID YOU  
COME FROM? GET BACK  
TILL THE WAGON  
PASSES!



VERA'S SO ANXIOUS  
ABOUT SANDY---I TOLD  
HER TO FIND OUT  
HOW HE IS AND  
TAKE THE NEWS  
BACK TO HER... IS  
HE CONSCIOUS?

NO! GET  
BACK, CONTESS!



YOUR HORSE IS SPOOKING THE WAGON  
TEAM, CONTESS---IN THE WORST PART  
OF THE ROAD! GET BACK!

WHO-O-OH! STEADY, YOU  
PONIES!



TELL ME FIRST WHAT MCGOWAN'S  
CONDITION IS, AUTRY!

HE'S ONE CROW-HOP FROM DESTRUCTION  
--- THANKS TO YOU! CLEAR OUT---OR  
I'LL SHOOT THAT CRAZY  
HORSE FROM  
UNDER YOU!



OH, ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO  
PRODDY, THOUGH, MARSHAL.



WHOA! YOU ORNERY CAUSES!  
BACK, UP!

BACK, CHAMP!



OKAY, DAVE, COME ON EASY! COATES HAS  
GONE, AND THE TEAM WILL HANDLE NOW.

Y-YEAH! THEY'RE CALMING DOWN,  
SOME.



GENE, WHAT IN THE COCKEYED  
WORLD OF WONDERS MADE WILD  
COATES PULL THAT STUNT?  
HE MUST HAVE GONE PLUMS LOOO!

SOMETHING LIKE THAT,  
DAVE! BUT HE WON'T  
BE BACK.



AT MIDMORNING, THE LONG, SLOW TRIP  
ENDS---SAFELY FOR THE UNCONSCIOUS SANDY.



AFTER AN HOUR IN THE HOSPITAL'S  
WAITING ROOM....

HERE COMES THE HEAD SURGEON,  
DAVE--TO TELL  
US WHAT HE  
FOUND!



THERE'S A BIT OF BROKEN BONE  
PRESSING ON YOUNG MCGOWAN'S  
BRAIN... IF WE OPERATE  
IMMEDIATELY, THERE'S A CHANCE  
FOR HIM.

WE'LL WAIT AROUND  
TO LEARN HOW THINGS GO,  
DOCTOR... THERE'S A MIGHTY  
FINE YOUNG LADY WAITING TO  
HEAR... BY PHONE!



I UNDERSTANDS  
I'LL SEE YOU  
GENTLEMEN AGAIN  
... AS SOON AS  
IT'S OVER.



AND WHILE WE'RE WAITING,  
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE  
THAT HEAD WOUND DRESSED  
GONE... I DON'T AIM  
TO SEE YOU WIND  
UP IN A  
HOSPITAL BED!



HUMPH! A BEAR'S CLAWS COULD HAVE  
MADE THREE OF THESE WOUNDS IN  
YOUR SCALP, MARSHALL ALTRY...  
BUT NOT THE  
FOURTH ONE.

WHY NOT?



WHY NOT? BECAUSE THAT ONE IS  
THE MARK OF A BULLET!

A BULLET, HUMPH?  
I GUESSED IT,  
BUT I'M SURE  
GLAD TO  
KNOW IT.



MEANWHILE, IN THE HOSPITAL'S SILENT  
OPERATING ROOM, A SURGEON'S SKILL  
BATTLES FOR THE LIFE OF SANDY MCGOWAN.



AND IN THE WARRING RANCH HOUSE A  
SLEEPLESS GIRL WATCHES THE CLOCK,  
WAITING FOR A TELEPHONE CALL THAT  
DOES NOT COME.



THE HOSPITAL--IT'S  
GOT TO BE FROM  
THE HOSPITAL!



HELLO! YES!  
DAVE LASSEN,  
TELL ME QUICK  
---THE OPERATION  
WENT WELL?  
SANDY'S OUT  
OF DANGER? OH,  
NOW I CAN  
BREATHE AGAIN!



THAT SAME AFTERNOON---

DOGGONE IT, GENE,  
I'M FALLING ASLEEP  
IN MY SADDLE!  
CAN'T WE GET  
SOME REST BEFORE  
WE PICK UP THAT  
KILLER'S TRAIL  
AGAIN?

WE'LL STOP  
AT WALDEN  
COTTAGE RANCH,  
DAVE, IF  
THAT'LL  
SUIT YOU.



HERE'S THE STABLE WHERE  
HE KEEPS THAT LOCO HORSE,  
SULTAN.



YOU WANT A LOOK-SEE INSIDE,  
GENE? WHY?

CURIOSITY, I RECKON!  
THAT SULTAN HORSE  
IS TOO ORNERY TO BE  
NATURAL--- I WANT  
TO KNOW WHY!



TAKE A GOOD LOOK  
AROUND, DAVE---FOR  
ANYTHING UNUSUAL...  
ANYTHING, SAVVY?



I DON'T SAVVY---  
BUT I'LL LOOK,  
TO PLEASE YOU.

UNSEEN BY THE  
SEARCHERS, THE SHADOW  
OF HORSEFACE HARRY  
FALLS ON THE STABLE'S  
REAR.



HERE, DAVE---  
UNDER THIS LOOSE  
FLOOR PLANK!  
LOOK!





WHY--DANG IT--THEY'RE BEAR PAWS!  
MADE OF IRON AND LEATHER!

MADE TO FASTEN ON  
SULTAN'S JOCKEYS!  
THAT'S WHAT I WAS  
SURE WE'D FIND  
SOMEWHERE, DAVE.

I RECKON  
HORSEFACE HARDY  
MADE 'EM, GENE--  
HE'S A WIZARD AT  
BLACKSMITHING  
AND LEATHER WORK  
--- THESE PLAIN  
LEATHER RIDS,  
TOO--

DAVE--LOOK OUT!



WITH DEADLY JUSTICE, SHERIFF  
LASSEN'S SHOT FINDS ITS MARK.



SULTAN WAS THAT RARE THING---AN  
INSANE HORSE! CHAMP AND THE TEAM  
HORSES SENSED IT--WALDEN COATES  
KNEW IT--- AND USED THE BEAST TO  
COMMIT MURDER... BUT WHY?

WE WON'T  
KNOW TILL WE  
GET COATES  
HIMSELF TO  
TALK,  
I RECKON...  
LET'S GO,  
GENE!

BUT AS SUNSET PAINTS THE HILLS ABOVE HER RANCH, VERA WARRING IS UNAWARE OF DANGER.

IT'S TERRIBLE, UNCLE WALDEN, THAT YOU FEEL YOU HAD TO TAKE MONEY FROM THE BANK'S FUNDS...



WITH ONLY MOTHER AND MYSELF TO CONSIDER, I'D GLADLY GIVE YOU THE AMOUNT YOU ASK... BUT SANDY McGOWAN AND I ARE GOING TO BE MARRIED... I CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT HIS APPROVAL.



THAT'S JUST WHAT I FIGURED! WELL - I HAVE A CHECK IN MY POCKET! WILL YOU SIGN IT NOW, OR---

NEVER! NOT IF YOU KILLED ME! MHHMMMMHHH!



YOUR KILLINGS ARE FINISHED, COATES...

A-A-A-Ah!



... AND SO ARE YOU!



DAVE! GENE! DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID?

ALL OF IT, VERA--FROM BEHIND THAT ROCK! IT EXPLAINS WHY BERT MOVES DEAD--HE KNEW TOO MUCH! AND WHY SANDY NEARLY DIED--HE NEVER HAD TO LET YOU GIVE MONEY TO A CROOK!



THEN--THERE WASN'T ANY BEAR?

NO, VERA! IT WAS SULTAN, WEARING BEAR-CLAW SHOES! DAVE WILL EXPLAIN IT ALL LATER--- YOU'VE HAD SHOCKS ENOUGH FOR NOW.



MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, GENE-- BUT I'M OWING YOU A DIFFERENT SORT OF SHOCK, I THINK. BECAUSE EXCEPT FOR YOU, MY SANDY MIGHT NOT BE ALIVE TODAY.. BEND DOWN, MARSHAL ALTRY! DON'T YOU KNOW HOW TO BE KISSED?





Jimmy woke up with a start. The first fingers of the sunrise light were probing through the window. He glanced at Dad's bed, a cheery greeting on his lips. But he swallowed the words. Dad's bed was empty! At that moment, he heard voices in the kitchen and realized what had awakened him had been the back door opening; its hinges always squeaked.

In barefoot silence, he hurried down the hall to the kitchen. On the threshold, he paused. His heart began to pound against his ribs far, just inside the back door, loomed Chad Mason—broad and bulky, his face dark with anxiety. Chad was Dad's night deputy. His being here at sunup spelled trouble. Dad was standing near the stove, alternately putting on his clothes and gulping black coffee.

"Tex Todd didn't do it," Dad was saying firmly. "He was settin' a trap line up on Bald Peak last night. I met him when I was ridin' home from the Lazy-Q-Bar. It musta been about ten-thirty, 'cause Len and I played checkers till ten and I left right afterwards. If Bunky Dimmitt was killed around eleven, his murderer wasn't Tex! Why, Tex couldn't have made it from Bald Peak to Bunky's in half an hour unless he had wings."

"But how're you gonna prove you saw Tex?" demanded Chad.

Dad's face reddened. "Reckon my word's good enough!" he snapped, sitting down to pull on his boots.

"Tis for me," said Chad, "but you'll need a heap more'n that to clear Tex. There's too much evidence against him. One o' his gloves was

found alongside the rifled strongbox. The knife that done the killin' belonged to him. An' three witnesses saw him ridin' away from Bunky's around twelve-thirty."

"What three witnesses?"

"Jake Wells, Lefty Dawd, an' Roy Nolan."

Dad snorted. "As if the law'd take the word of those ornery gunslingers ahead of mine!"

"There's three o' them, Sheriff, an' only one o' you."

Dad stood up and took his gunbelt from the back of the chair. "Mark'n likely, THEY pulled the job and planted the evidence against Tex. It'd be simple to get his glove and knife. He never locks his cabin."

Chad shrugged. "Could be, but it'd take a heap o' provin'. Take time, too. An' that's somethin' you haven't got. Not if Jake Wells meant what he was sayin' when I started over here."

"I've been sheriff of Sundale for five years, Chad, and there's never been a lynchin' yet!" Dad practically spat out the words.

Jimmy padded into the kitchen and said, "Are they going to hang Tex, Dad?"

"Not if I can help it!" Dad looked at his deputy. "Get back down street, Chad, and try to keep the lid on for a couple hours. I'll head for Bald Peak. If I find Tex, I'll take him to the Rawhide jail. He'll be safe there till I can prove who really killed Bunky."

When the door had closed behind Chad, Dad turned to Jimmy. "Better stick close to home today, son."

"Okay, Dad . . . but what'll I do if

Tex comes here?"

"What makes you think he might?"

"Well, when he finds out about the murder an' that he's accused o' dain' it, he'll remember meetin' you last night, an' prob'ly come straight here to get you to back up his alibi."

Dad smiled proudly. "Smart figurin' for a fourteen-year-old." He patted Jimsy's shoulder. "If Tex does show up, hide him till I get back. Drowned if I know where you'll do it, though."

Jimsy was in the living room, rearranging his butterfly collection, when the voice of the mob came through the open window. Jimsy started across the room. As he neared the doorway, Tex Todd filled it.

"The mob! They're after me!" he gasped. "I didn't kill Bunky! Where's your Pa?"

"Lookin' for you. He knows you're not guilty." Jimsy slid under the big man's arm and headed down the hall. "Come on! I've gotta hide you till Dad gets back."

As Jimsy returned to the living room, the mob, headed by Jake Wells, stormed through the front gate. Jimsy went to the door to meet them.

"We want Tex Todd!" shouted Jake. "He come in here an'—"

Jimsy interrupted. "Did he? You're welcome to look."

Jake scowled. "Don't think we won't! Get to it, men!"

Although it was but fifteen minutes, to Jimsy it seemed like hours before Jake was standing in the back yard, snarling, "Well, he ain't in any o' the buildings!"

Jake's glance wandered past the corral, past the hitch rock, and paused at a clump of very tall grasses near the corncrib. "Mebbe he's in them grasses," he said and took a step that way. At the roar of laughter that went up, he purpled. "What's so funny?"

A tall rancher stepped forward and pointed a long finger at a black-and-gold butterfly poised on the tiptop of the tallest grass spear. "You are, Jake! If anybody was hidin' in them grasses, that butterfly wouldn't be ridin' there, nice an' quiet in the breeze." The

rancher turned. "C'm on, men! Let's git our hosses on' head for Bald Peak. I gatto notion we'll pick up Tex's trail there."

The echoing hoofbeats of the mob's horses had scarcely died away when Dad rode into the yard. Jimsy ran to meet him. "Tex is here!" he panted. "An' the mob was here, too . . . lookin' for him. Searched everywhere but they didn't find him. He's hid over there in the tall grasses by the corncrib."

Swinging out of the saddle, Dad shouted, "Come on out, Tex! I've got good news for you. When Tex's head appeared above the grasses, he continued, "I found the lost from Bunky's strongbox at Jake's place. Bein' as he didn't know I was your olibi, I figured he might be kinda careless. An' my figurin' proved right."

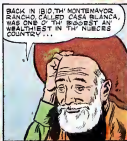
"You're plenty smart, Sheriff," grinned Tex, "but you've got a long ways to go afore you catch up with that son o' yours."

"I don't savvy." Dad looked puzzled.

Tex chuckled. And, reaching to the tip-top of the tallest grass spear, removed a black-and-gold butterfly—one of the prize specimens in Jimsy's collection!



# CARABAJAL'S LOOT



\* BUT WHEN TH' INJUNS WENT ON TH' WARDATH AN' WIPED OUT A NEAR-BY VILLAGE ...



"OLD JUAN MONTEMAJOR DECIDED TO SELL OUT HIS HOLDINGS."

I HAVE SIGNED, SEÑOR GARCIA! THE RANCHO IS NOW YOURS! YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE MONEY?

SI, SEÑOR! MY MEN WILL BRING IT INSIDE AT ONCE!



"AS HE'D DEMANDED, MONTEMAJOR WAS PAID IN FULL WITH GOLD COINS."

SO MUCH GOLD WILL NOT BRING DANGER TO YOUR CASA, SEÑOR MONTEMAJOR!

I DO NOT FEAR! NOT ONLY HAVE I MANY GUARDS, BUT, WITHIN THE WEEK, I SHALL TAKE IT AND MY FAMILY BACK TO MEXICO!



"FIVE NIGHTS LATER MONTEMAJOR WAS 'TAKIN' A LAST WALK AROUND TH' RANCHO."



"HE HAD NO WAY O' KNOWIN' THAT TH' NOTORIOUS MEXICAN BANDIT, CARABAJAL, WAS LYIN' IN WAIT WITH ONE O' HIS MEN."

AHA! THE OLD ONE COMES! PREPARE TO SEIZE HIM! AND REMEMBER — EVEN A SMALL SOUND WILL BRING THE GUARDS!



"AGAINST SUCH ODDS, OLD MONTEMAVOR DIDN'T STAND TH' GHOST OF A CHANCE!"



"TH' BANDITS TOOK HIM TO THEIR SECRET CAMP IN TH' NEAR-BY WOODS."



MERCY, SERCO!  
I AM OLD!

THEN TALK!  
WHERE IS YOUR  
GOLD HIDDEN?  
TALK! OR YOU  
SHALL DIE!

"MONTEMAVOR COULDN'T DO NOTHIN' BUT TELL HIM!"

THE GOLD... IT IS IN THE  
OLD WELL... NEAR THE  
ORCHARD! NOW, HAYE...  
GO HOME!

NOT TILL WE SEE  
WHETHER YOU HAVE  
TOLD THE TRUTH,  
OLD ONE!



"WHILE CARABAJA, AN ONE OF HIS MEN WENT BACK TO CASA BLANCA, MONTEMAVOR Huddled ON TH' GROUND."



"TH' GOLD WAS RIGHT WHERE OLD JUAN SAID IT WAS!"

SO MUCH GOLD,  
CARABAJA! WE  
ARE RICH!

WE ARE DEAD IF  
WE DO NOT  
YAMOOSE, PRONTOR!



"TH' BANDITS TOTED TH' LOOT BACK TO TH' HIDE-OUT CAMP."

ALAS! I AM DOOMED! YOU SHALL RUE THIS NIGHT, CARABAJAL! A THOUSAND CURSES ON YOU!



"INSTEAD OF LETTIN' OLD JUAN GO FREE ..."

HA! HA! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WILL HAVE THE REGRETS, SENOR!



"AFORE TH' ECHO O' THAT SHOT DIED AWAY ..."

CARABAJAL! AN HOMBRE! HE WAS SPYING ON US! NOW HE RUNS AWAY!

DIABLO! HE MAYBE IS ONE OF ANOTHER BAND THAT IS AFTER THE GOLD! WE MUST HIDE IT, MUY PRONTO!



"FAST, BUT QUIET-LIKE, THEY BURIED THEIR LOOT IN A NEAR-BY ROCK DEN."



"AN BUT OLD MONTEMAJOR'S BODY ON TOP ..."

HA! HA! OLD JUAN DID NOT DREAM HE WOULD BE OUR GUARD FOR THE GOLD!



"THEN THEY WENT BACK TO THEIR CAMP TO GIT SET IN CASE D' TROUBLE."

WORK FAST, COMPAGÑEROS! IT WILL BE LIGHT IN AN HOUR! THE ATTACK WILL COME THEN, IF IT IS COMING!





"AT SUNUP TH' OTHER BANDIT GANG ATTACKED!"



"ALTHOUGH OUTNUMBERED MOREN THREE TO ONE, CARABAJAL AN' HIS MEN FOUGHT DESPERATELY."



"BUT THEY FINALLY HAD TO DUCK INTO THE BUSH."



"TH' LEADER OF TH' ATTACKIN' GANG WENT AFTER CARABAJAL."



"MAKIN' A QUICK DISMOUNT, HE RAN TO CARABAJAL'S SIDE."



"BEFORE I FINISH YOU, SENOR, TELL ME — JOT! CARABAJAL! MY BROTHER!"

"SI, GASPARD... I SENT YOU WORD... I WOULD GET THE SOLD... BRING IT BACK TO... MAIN CAMP..."

"WITH HIS OWN BREATH, CARABAJAL SHARED TH' SECRET OF TH' MONTEMAJOR GOLD!"

I DID NOT GET THE WORD! ALAS! WHAT HAVE I DONE?

YOU HAVE KILLED ME... MY BROTHER... BUT YOU SHALL HAVE THE GOLD... IT IS IN THE PEN... BY THE SPRINGS...



"BUT BEFORE CASPAR AN' HIS MOB COULD GET TO TH' ROCK PEN..."

LOOK, CASPAR! MANY RIDERS COME THIS WAY!

MONTEMAJOR'S VAQUEROS! SHOE FOR THE RIO GRANDE! WE WILL COME BACK FOR THE GOLD LATER!



"THEY NEVER DID COME BACK, THOUGH, 'CAUSE TH' CASA BLANCA VAQUEROS! CAUGHT UP WITH 'EM AFORE THEY REACHED TH' RIVER..."



AN' WIDED 'EM OUT! 'TWARNT SMART, NEITHER SEEBIN AS HOW NOBODY WAS LEFT ALIVE WHO KNEW WHERE TH' GOLD WAS HO!



HASNT IT EVER BEEN FOUND YET?

NOPE! SHORE WIST TO COME ACROSS IT! LEE'D BE JEST ONE BIG PICNIC FOR MEN JUSHAID HERE FROM THIS MINUTE ON!



STATEMENT OF THE UNDERSIGNED MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF August 24, 1912, as amended by the act of March 3, 1933, and July 3, 1940 of the Great Society Census, published monthly in New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1940, State of New York, County of New York, as follows: I, a citizen of the State of New York, and county of New York, personally appeared Helen Meyer, who, having been duly sworn according to law, depose and say that she is the Business Manager of the Great Society Census, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (if not a daily, weekly, semi-weekly, or tri-weekly newspaper, the circulation, or of the domestic publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the act of March 3, 1933, and July 3, 1940 (Public Law 469, United States and Territories), printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, George T. DeLoach, Jr., 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Editor, Helen Meyer, 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor, Helen Meyer, 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Business Manager, Helen Meyer, 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George T. DeLoach, Jr., 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Margaret DeLoach, 415 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known contributors, managers, and other writing bodies owning or holding a per cent or more of total volume of books, magazines, or other articles and News

4. That the two paragraphs are shown, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholders or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, if given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements affirming if known full knowledge and belief as to the ownership and control under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold such just securities as a company other than that of a bona fide owner, and also affirm that no means is known that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities that as so stated by law.

(Signed) HELEN MEYER

Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of September, 1940

JEANETTE SMITH (GREEN)

(Not)

(My Commission Expires March 31, 1941)



